(c) Yes, Sir. The Govt. has decided to spend money out of the interest accured on Corpus Fund to safeguard and develop the culture of our country.

(d) It has been decided to spend an amount equal to the amount contributed by a private sponsor for a cultural project. However, other proposals which do not have a private sponsor are decided upon by the Governing Council of the National Culture Fund.

Financial assistance to Shri Bismillah Khan

†990. PROF. RAM DEO BHANDARY: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Internationally renowned Shehnai Player, Shri Bismillah Khan is ill and his economic position is also very deplorable;

(b) whether Government have considered to provide him treatment and financial assistance; and

(c) if so, the immediate and permanent scheme to provide assistance to Shri Khan?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) There have been media reports to this effect.

(b) and (c) Ustad Bismillah Khan has been honoured by the Sangeet Natak Akademi with the Akademi Award as well as the Akademi Fellowship. Awardees and Fellows of Sangeet Natak Akademi are covered under a Medical Insurance scheme by which they can claim up to Rs. 1 lakh per annum for hospitalisation- expenses. Besides, Prime Minister has sanctioned Rs. 2 lakhs as relief to Ustad Bismillah Khan. State Governments of Uttar Pradesh and Punjab have also offered financial assistance of Rs. 5 lakhs each.

Amendment to the antiquities and Arts Treasures Act, 1972

991. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE:
SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.